

STATE CAPITOL
PO BOX 942849
SACRAMENTO, CA 94249
Ph (916) 651-4003
Fax (916) 651-4903

California State Senate

**SENATOR
BILL DODD**

THIRD SENATE DISTRICT



COMMITTEES
GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATION
BUSINESS, PROFESSIONS AND
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
TRANSPORTATION AND HOUSING
INSURANCE
ENERGY, UTILITIES AND
COMMUNICATION

CHAIR: SENATE GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATION COMMITTEE

January 4, 2021

Mr. Joaquin Esquivel, Chair
State Water Resources Control Board
1001 I Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: General Waste Discharge Requirements for Winery Process Water

Dear Chair Esquivel:

I am writing to follow-up on earlier communications regarding the General Waste Discharge Requirements for Winery Process Water (Winery Order) that the SWRCB is currently considering. I believe the requirements should be tailored to maintain the environmental integrity while reducing unnecessary costs on California's wineries.

I request your consideration of changes to the proposed tier structure included in the Winery Order. Tier 4 includes a wide span of winery sizes, ranging from wineries producing approximately 77,000 cases up to 1.1 million cases of wine annually. These wineries have vastly different economic positions, yet wineries at the bottom end of Tier 4 are being asked to make the same investments in compliance as those at the top end of the tier. It is expected that they will also be asked to pay the same amount in fees once a fee schedule is adopted.

Additionally, the Winery Order includes requirements that wineries in Tiers 2-4 with subsurface disposal systems meet effluent limits to remain in compliance with pre-treatment systems. Current estimates of the costs of those pre-treatment systems range from \$724,000 for a Tier 3 winery to \$2.8 million for a winery on the lower end of Tier 4. This is a significant investment for wineries and one that should not be taken lightly.

As you know, wineries have faced unprecedented challenges this year between shutdowns of tasting rooms to reduce the spread of COVID-19 as well as the numerous wildfires that impacted grape harvests. It is estimated that California's wineries, are expected to see losses of \$3.7 billion from this year's fires and an additional \$4.2 billion in losses from the pandemic.

I thank you for considering my request to craft the Winery Order to minimize costs where there is not a clear and overwhelming environmental benefit. I would also like to request that Water Board staff continue working with stakeholders to resolve the tiers and effluent limit concerns that have been raised. I look forward to adoption of an effective and broadly supported permit.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Bill Dodd".

Senator, District 3